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ABSTRACT

For education to make a lasting difference in people's lives, it must touch all dimensions of being human in ways that are integrated or holistic. Content and instructional methods, such as those of Kurt Hahn and Charity James, that are based on images of the intact human being see things whole from the beginning. But our school experience and the dominant influence of reductionist thought make it nearly impossible to avoid fragmenting program content and delivery. Restoring the wholeness to the fragments is difficult. Long-term observation of students in Outward Bound and other adventure programs suggests that six factors have the power to cut across the separateness of program components. These transcendent factors are: (1) active student experience with the subject phenomenon; (2) student experience of the complete process; (3) student perception that the experience is authentic or relevant to the real world (regardless of the objective reality of the problem situation); (4) student responsibility and exposure to the natural consequences of decisions and actions; (5) challenge, pain, or fear that causes students to draw on every conceivable resource; and (6) sense of community. In terms of educational significance, students' emotions and beliefs count as much as their knowledge. In this connection, there is an unresolved debate in adventure education about how to develop the spiritual dimension of courses while respecting the various beliefs that students hold. (SV)

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HUMPTY DUMPTY RECONSIDERED:

SEEING THINGS WHOLE IN OUTWARD BOUND.[1]

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Humpty Dumpty Reconsidered: Seeing Things Whole in Outward Bound.

Bert Horwood

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the Queen's women and all the King's men

Could not put Humpty together again.

Introduction

Human experience is something like Humpty Dumpty. Once fragmented into categories, there is no restoring its original integrity. Education, especially in the academic form, is highly compartmentalized and experience is fragmented, like Humpty Dumpty. Everyone who has been to school carries this fragmentation with them and tends to sustain the illusion that learning, wherever it occurs, must be atomized. In this article, I take the position that, for education to make a difference in people's lives, the process must "see things whole." The article describes what it means to see things whole and cites the thought and practice of Kurt Hahn and Charity James as holistic practitioners. Then, I draw on recent research to identify conditions for action which have shown themselves to promote integrity in learning. Finally, there is discussion of some implications for practice.

What it means to See Things Whole

Seeing things whole is a short hand expression for trying to encompass the entire human condition. The phrase is found in Joseph Meeker's book, *The Comedy of Survival* , "A hopeless attempt to see things whole is at least as worthy as the

equally hopeless task of isolating fragments for intensive study ... and much more interesting" (Meeker,1980, p18).

But what does it mean to encompass the entire human condition? It means recognizing that we humans are thinking, feeling, believing beings. Human lives have physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social dimensions. The purely intellectual curriculum of the academy is as distorted as the purely physical skill emphasis of some leadership training courses. It would be seriously inappropriate to promote an anti-intellectual perspective, or an anti-skill perspective. My position is that intellectual and physical dimensions in the curriculum are equally as important as emotional, social and spiritual ones. That's what it means to speak of seeing things whole.

Any course which fails to see things whole fails to generate the kind of learning which profoundly influences future actions and which transfers into future settings. For example, when we consider the length of time that environmental issues have been in the curriculum and when we consider how little difference that environmental education has made in the world, it is hard to escape the judgment that all we have done is to make better and better informed polluters. Education can't make a difference in the way we live our lives unless it touches the deep drivers and wellsprings of our beings. Those drivers and wellsprings are not intellectual, they are spiritual. But to be properly driven with respect the environment is of little value if one is ignorant of how living systems work. The point is that education doesn't transfer, nor influence routine behaviour, unless it has touched *all* the aspects of being human.

John Miller is a curriculum scholar and teacher who has described the differences in curriculum structure which follow from different sets of values (Miller et al., 1991). He shows that when we adopt a fragmented world view, such as the belief

that everything can be reduced to discrete simple units (atomism), for example, incomplete learning follows. On the other hand, when course designers hold a world view that sees things whole the curriculum is intact and powerful. The learning from such curricula is, in Miller's words, transformative. Transformative learning deeply influences how people live their lives. Environmental education, has not been transformative.

Two Approaches to Humpty Dumpty

There are two ways to understand integration. Reconsidering Humpty Dumpty illustrates the differences between them. The nursery rhyme emphasizes Humpty Dumpty in pieces and distracts attention from his previous intact existence. The literature of integration in education is much the same (Case 1991). It calls attention to the fragmented state of subjects and disciplines resulting from mechanistic ways of thinking. Attempts to see things whole are made by trying to put together discrete and separate elements of program. Such attempts fail because they are grounded in a shattered view of the world. Students and instructors with an atomistic turn of mind can not be fooled into thinking that rock climbing has any connection with kayaking or solos.

There is another way. It is to begin with the curriculum before it falls off the wall. This means building programs based, not on fitting separate elements together, but on values emerging from some comprehensive theory about human nature. Educators, such as Kurt Hahn and Charity James, who followed this route, never talk about integration, because they do not start with anything that is separated or scattered. They don't put Humpty Dumpty on the wall. One of the strengths of Outward Bound programs for seeing things whole is that their prime referent is thought and practice

such as that of Hahn. But this advantage may not be enough to overcome the fragmentation which we all carry with us a result of schooling in reductionist world views.

Keeping Humpty Dumpty Whole

Kurt Hahn, the moving spirit of Outward Bound, was a splendid exemplar of an educator who saw things whole. The so called pillars of Hahn's educational thought were based on his opinion that the youth of his day were declining in fitness, craft, adventure and compassion. Broadly understood, they encompass all aspects of being human. A more current interpretation of our social malaise is alienation; alienation from self, from others, from the natural and spirit worlds. To see things whole, educators must find ways to address all these dimensions.

Hahn gave the instructors at his first school, Salem, a set of guidelines which can stand to-day as a useful way to see things whole: Students must discover their own identities, while at the same time forget themselves in pursuit of common goals. Students must be trained to plan by learning to imagine events and consequences. Students must experience both success and failure. There should be periods of silence and periods of sport. The children of the rich and influential must be freed from the paralyzing effects of privilege, and, one might add, disadvantaged children should be freed from the paralyzing effects of poverty (Ewald, 1970).

These features are well known to the Outward Bound community and appear to a greater or lesser extent in many courses. Charity James (1968), an English educator who was roughly contemporary with Kurt Hahn, is less well known. Her ideas shed a different light on the notion of seeing things whole and have potential to enhance integrity in the Outward Bound process.

In her book, *Young Lives at Stake*, James states that "three fundamental human behaviours are enquiry, making and dialogue." Enquiry is driven by curiosity and includes finding out about something and explaining it by any means. Enquiry also implies sensitivity to the structure of problems and their resolution. James does not restrict her meaning of enquiry to scientific thinking. Finding out, solving and explaining may be applied to any question of interest and the form of explanatory response can be mythic, artistic, narrative or scientific. In the language of adventure education, enquiry is much like individual or group problem-solving when thorough debriefing is included.

Making is the human propensity to construct both abstract and concrete objects. A poem, a slide show, a journal, a humpy shelter, a sketch, all represent making. This is the creative, productive and useful aspect of life. For James, the process of learning could not be complete without making being present.

Dialogue is the third characteristic and is by far the most difficult. Dialogue does not mean a conversation exactly, but rather it is a form of interactive appreciation, the expression of a sense of wonder and awe, a non-purposive, non-exploitive enjoyment of one's world. Dialogue is practised and enjoyed with other people, it's true, but in James's thought, dialogue happens with anything, whether the night sky, a Mozart Sonata or a pine tree. Dialogue is, centrally, an emotional and spiritual process.

These three fundamental behaviours (as James claims) are not meant to be mutually exclusive categories. They denominate the chief dimension of the activity. In enquiry, which is predominantly intellectual, there are aspects of physical, emotional and social activity. In making, which is most apparently physical, there must be intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Similarly, dialogue which is primarily emotional and spiritual, gathers in and employs the other aspects of being human.

If instructors were to take enquiry, making and dialogue as the basics of education, they would be driven to see things whole because these processes do not "divide the seamless coat of learning" (Whitehead, 1950).

Putting Humpty Together Again:
Lessons from Research

Over the last decade, I have observed students in a variety of adventure settings as part of an extended research program. The perspective of that research has been to portray outdoor school events from the students' point of view. Students have been the prime sources of information and insights. The data includes my experiences of being a participant on the trail with courses, formally recorded interviews, less formal conversations with individuals and groups, student journals, film and video recording. Instructors, parents, and other significant outsiders, were also consulted, but the point was always to discover the students' accounts of life as learners in their programs.

Clearly, it would be better to keep Humpty Dumpty intact. But it is extremely difficult for those of us who have been schooled in the world after the fall. The findings from my field research suggest that there are factors which have the power to succeed in putting Humpty back together. I call them transcendent factors because they cut across the separateness of program components. Putting discrete subjects together is bound to fail unless such transcendent factors are present to overcome the dominant orientation that learning occurs through discrete subjects. There are six transcendent factors recognizable in my research experience. They are: active experience, complete process, authenticity, responsibility, challenge, and community.

Active Experience

Students must have direct, immediate experience with the subject

phenomenon. The experience always comes at the earliest possible moment in the instruction. If preliminary instruction is needed it is given experientially. The use of immersion techniques at the start of courses is an example of early active experience in Outward Bound. Active experience is the quintessence of Outward Bound practice.

Putting top value on the students' experiences also means that each student's entire background of experience is recognized and used. Active experience as a mode of teaching leads to integration because the experiential repertoire of each person transcends boundaries. As the person tries to make sense of their current experiences, they integrate and reconstruct their past experiences accordingly because the system of which they are a part has valued those experiences.

Complete process

Complete process means that students perform and experience as much of the total sequence in any process as feasible. I watched a group of students who were making traditional black ash pack baskets with a local craftsman. It would have been easy for him to provide the ash strips, demonstrate weaving the strips and supervise the students at work. In this case, the instructor brought logs, not strips. The students had to clear away the bark, pound a lengthwise section of the logs with sledge hammers, cut off one strip of wood and repeat the process until each log was reduced to slender pliable strips. Only then could they begin to construct their packs. Even more complete process would have had the students locate and fell the trees, and so on. Complete process can be carried to impractical extremes.

Another interesting case of complete process is found in meal preparation by students. The process is more complete if they have planned the menu, still more complete if they have also packaged the food, even more complete still if they have had to find the food. If meat is on the menu, having students kill, dress and cook the

animal completes the process to provide high impact learning which is fully integrated.

It is impossible to move instruction toward complete process without pulling separated things together and without challenging assumptions about fixed categories of knowledge. In the latter example, so few of us kill our own meat, that to provide live meat on the trail or in camp is sure to provoke profound examination of who we are and what we eat. When students participate in complete processes they are forced to see things whole.

Authenticity

Authenticity is a closely related consequence of experience with complete process. When students act constructively in the world they believe that what they do is important because it makes a difference. Kurt Hahn was convinced that youth required above all else to be needed. This requirement is no less true for mature people. When students see that their course work makes a difference in the world they are not only better motivated, but they see the connections and overlaps that integrate their activities. In short they see things whole.

Student statements regarding authenticity reveal a puzzle. Students treated highly contrived events, such as constructed initiative tasks, as authentic events. For example, a group of teenagers spent three difficult hours on a winter stream crossing in the full knowledge that there was a bridge across the stream only 10 minute's walk away. They treated the problem as though it was real, as though there was no other way to cross the stream safely. Their seriousness in working out the physical and social challenges, and their elation with success, flew in the face of the obvious fact that the contrived situation was entirely meaningless, if one simply wished to get to the other side. In conversation and interviews, students ascribed authenticity to the problem in words that said, in effect, that this was a real- world (as opposed to school-

world) problem.

I suspect that the critical value in authenticity lies in the perception of the participants. In this respect it is like risk, in that high perceived risk with low actuarial risk yields an optimal combination of effectiveness with safety. The educational value of contrived problems lies in developing high perceived authenticity, regardless of the reality of the problem situation from another point of view.

Authenticity is integrative because the real world, as it is understood by students, has not fallen off the wall. In the real world, students understand that people draw on all their resources of brain, brawn and spirit to accomplish tasks to which they are committed.

Responsibility

Responsibility means involving students with the course work in such a way that they are exposed to the consequences of their own decisions and actions. If students in a program are required to make up the gear for an expedition, but the instructor carries spare parts to cover deficiencies and breakage, then the students have not been made responsible for their part in organizing the gear.

Where responsibility is present, participants are exposed to inescapable consequences of their successes and failures in being responsible. One of the dilemmas for instructors is to decide what level of consequences are acceptable and safe. Risks are always present when students have a level of responsibility. The higher the responsibility the greater the risk when things go wrong. It is important to note that consequences in this context are not contrived by the instructor as though they were a punishment. Consequences are literally the results and conditions which ensue as a matter of course from earlier conditions. The central point is that protective back-up actions by instructors to soften the impact of consequences (and reduce risk)

always reduces, even eliminates, student responsibility.

The research shows that students recognize two axes of responsibility. The common one is responsibility between instructor and student. Most students feel responsible to the instructor. The second axis appears in successfully integrated programs. Here, in addition to the first axis, students also feel responsibility to and from their peers. For example, students who had a route-planning task for a day hike, expressed more concern about the impact of their decisions on their classmates than about gaining the instructor's approval.

Responsibility is integrative because it drives the students to feel that they own the events and processes going on. With ownership goes a determination not to let artificial limits stand in the way of eventual success. This is the reason that instructors may not intervene to protect students from consequences without denying the students ownership as well. When students broaden their commitment to include the welfare of their peers as well as meeting instructor expectations, the feeling of ownership is even stronger.

Challenge

All of these factors are difficult to achieve. They make demands on the determination and courage of students and instructors alike. It was typical, in the programs I observed, that students found the work difficult. It was not made easy. They were never let off the hook. Yet there was a climate of high expectation and support which swept students along. As Kurt Hahn wished, students experienced both success and failure, just as one would expect from attempting the difficult. Students became accustomed to doing things which appeared at first to be impossible for them.

Meeting the weather provides an example. Novices in outdoor travel find the

weather challenging. On the early days of a canoe expedition, rain gear appears at the first sprinkle of rain. A day of light showers may see novices pack and unpack rain clothing repeatedly. Students express a strong sense of disbelief when the exigencies of travel first require them to make a fire, cook, eat, clean up and break camp under a steady rain which has already soaked most of their gear. The challenge is not simply to endure, but to find the ability to get warm and dry when cold and wet.

The experience of challenge is closely related to the experience of fear and pain. It is a paradox that these perceived negatives are connected to positive learning. Pain is an almost continuous companion in the early stages of any self propelled outdoor travel and many adventure education activities are designed to generate productive levels of fear. For integration to happen, there needs to be conversation about what pain and fear mean. There is no virtue in suffering in silence. Perceptive instructors recognize the symptoms and create opportunities for students to talk about fear and pain, where they come from and go to. Student learning is enhanced when it is clear that instructors also experience those feelings.

Challenge is integrating for two reasons. First, the challenging elements in the curriculum, such as weather, pain and fear, transcend the categories of activities. They become common elements which make different course components alike. Second, in the struggle to succeed, students draw on every conceivable resource without regard to the discipline to which it might belong.

Community

Community is a dynamic property that feeds the other factors and, in turn, is fed by them. It is impossible to have sustained experiential education without having a supportive community of fellow learners who are going through the same struggles. Learning happens alone; it also happens in a social context. Responsibility grows

where students have a communal sense of possession of the work and mutual obligations one to another. But community goes beyond mutual obligations for the curriculum.

Simply sharing a common enterprise does not go far in building community. For example, passengers on a long bus trip may chat together, but close proximity and common experience alone don't build community. One of the most important components in developing community is for students and instructors to prepare and eat meals together. In my field work, this appears as the simplest and most powerful way of building community. Community is also built by conversation, story-telling, group music making and group ceremony.

These aspects of community emphasize the community of learners with instructors as an integral part. But in most educational practice, students come and go, but instructors continue for more prolonged periods. It is easy for instructors to become isolated. The community of instructors is an equally important aspect of community for integration because it provide the reciprocal support needed to stay with difficult work.

I think that community contributes to integration because it is the expression of mutuality in relationships. Community completes the circle of interaction. Community members both serve and receive service. Conversation implies listening and speaking. Both support and criticism are reciprocal. When community is fully developed, there can be comfortable, prolonged periods of silence and solitude which expresses deeper, inchoate values.

Conclusion

There are lessons in this work for course content and instruction. I want to

emphasize three and comment on the problems of including spiritual dimensions. The first lesson is the central importance of content being driven by images of Humpty Dumpty whole. Continual reference to thoughtful practitioners like Hahn and James is one way to keep such images fresh and alive. From them come notions, sometimes neglected, of the importance of aesthetic and spiritual aspects of learning. If James is right, then most practice could do with more attention being paid to dialogue and making. In specific terms, that means taking time to pay attention to our interactions, especially with non-human nature, and converting those experiences into something made. This contributes to the case for significant periods of solitude, ceremony and creativity in any course.

Second, developing the transcendent factors of active experience, complete process, perceived authenticity, responsibility, challenge and community in whatever program content and methods are chosen, generates glue to hold the bits and pieces together. Transcendent factors must be present for instruction involving discrete elements to be integrated.

Third, it is clear that everything counts in terms of educational significance. Students' emotions count as much as their knowledge. The tacit myths which drive each person's way of comprehending and believing can either block or enhance the kind of learning that makes a difference in the person's life. Somehow those myths need to be expressed and acknowledged.

In this connection, there is an unresolved debate which is almost as old as Outward Bound itself (Arnold-Brown, 1962). It pivots about the distinction between spirituality and religion, understood as a particular sectarian dogma or teaching. There was general acknowledgement in the early days of Outward Bound that some attention should be paid to the spiritual dimension in Outward Bound courses. This

commonly took the form of a military practice of the day called "the Padre's Hour." This was a gathering at which a clergyman presided for whatever activities he deemed would be good for those present. There might be a discussion, or a religious service, or both. The orientation was totally Christian and strongly Anglican. The point of contention was the extent to which the Padre's Hours, and other moments of spiritual content, should aim to convert students to Christianity. The early Outward Bound leaders were split along evangelical and non-Christian lines and never resolved the difference except, in agreeing to disagree, Outward Bound practice became increasingly secular.

I emphasize this point, because, to see things whole, we must include the spiritual dimension. The old debate, which has yet to be resolved, is how to do that without imposing an inappropriate religious system on students' existing beliefs. Or putting it another way, the problem is how to develop the spiritual dimension of courses while respecting the varied beliefs students hold.

This is a point where practice precedes theory. The use of inspirational readings in Outward Bound courses is an example. What makes a reading inspirational? A powerful reading creates the opportunity to talk over the underlying spiritual values which makes the passage effective. Another largely ignored aspect of spiritual life is dreaming. To make our dreams the topics of conversation, not for therapeutic or psychoanalytic purposes, but more simply as a universal feature of being human is an ancient but largely religion-free form of spiritual activity. People have an innate ability to ritualize events, stories and beliefs. It would not overburden crowded course schedules to include group development and performance of ceremonies. Making music and masks have potential to contribute to an active and wholesome ceremonial life. Regular periods of silence and solitude, quite apart from

major solos, contribute to the spiritual dimension. Seed and Macy (1988) and LaChapelle (1988) provide a useful set of ideas for getting started.

I've argued that for education to make a lasting difference in people's lives it must touch all the dimensions of being human in ways that have integrity or wholeness. To develop content and methods for instruction that are based on images of the intact human being, such as those of Kurt Hahn and Charity James, is to see things whole from the beginning. But our schooling experience, and the dominant influence of reductionist thought, make it nearly impossible to avoid fragmenting program content and delivery. All the same, there are factors in educational practice which have been demonstrated to transcend fragmentation and promote integration. Perhaps with thoughts like these we can hope to make Humpty Dumpty whole.

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